DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 311 365 CG 021 980

AUTHOR Drevets, Roma G.
TITLE Change: A Blessing or a Curse?
PUB DATE Jun 89
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Anglo-American Conference of the American Association for Counseling and Development (Brunel, West London, June 25-29, 1989).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adjustment (to Environment); *Career Counseling; *Change; Change Strategies; *Dislocated Workers; Outplacement Services (Employment); *Self Concept; *Unemployment

ABSTRACT

The problem of job displacement poses numerous challenges for the client and the counselor. Not only must the counselor deal with the problems of re-programming the worker, but he or she must also deal with the worker's own loss and feelings of worthlessness. The import of the counselor who successfully works with the unemployed is immeasurable. The key to understanding the unemployment process and examining the client's self-image includes a knowledge of the stages of job loss (shock, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance) which are similar to the stages in the grieving process. It is also necessary to be able to identify the stages of job search burnout, which begins with enthusiasm and then moves to stagnation, frustration, and finally apathy. In a counseling center for dislocated persons all areas of the self would be covered: spiritual, cultural, intellectual, moral, physical, social, and economic. When nothing is more important than being a success, it is crucial in working with dislocated persons that all areas of the true self be developed. Above all, a counseling center working with these persons must imbed in their clients the ability to look forward to change, to the new person the client is becoming. The pain that overwhelms one is nurturing the inner self. It is necessary to trust the gift of change. (ABL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Roma G. Drevets
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED311365

CG 021980

Change: A Blessing or a Curse?

Roma G. Drevets
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kansas, 66506

The older person's role that I shall eventually play will be quite different from the role that I now play. Another role is beginning. And how many different roles will I play before the final curtain? Many. And if I play well each part, my life will receive its true laurels.

So it is with jobs and occupations. We are not constant; we change with the times. It is our attitudes and willingness to meet these changes as ladders, rather than stumbling stones, as opportunities, rather than defeats and as challenges, rather than obstacles, that allow us to achieve in spite of change.

The problem of job displacement poses numerous challenges for the client and the counselor. Not only must the counselor deal with the problems of re-programming the worker, but he or she must also deal with the worker's own loss and feelings of worthlessness. The import of the counselor who successfully works with the unemployed is immeasurable. Like tipped dominoes, every life is touched by the chain reaction of one person who is employed or unemployed.

The focus of this paper is primarily on the role of the counselor in working with these individuals. To successfully attain such goals, the counselor must acquire a basic understanding of, and an enhanced philosophical approach to, preventing serious depression, disruptive behavior, and permanent unemployment. If we are to survive today, we must help the dislocated worker, the displaced factory worker or farmer, the career changer, and the divorcee whether that person be man or woman, Black or White, old young, handicapped or not handicapped. He or she is a specific example of a counseling situation that demands all the skills of the profession.

Paper presented at the Anglo—American Conference of the American Association for Counseling and Development, June 25—29, Brunel/University of West London.

Barton (1983) emphasizes the importance of a positive attitude in working with these clients. In addition, Evans (1979) warns of the possibility of professionals being forced to join the dislocated worker ranks. And Jones (1979), in working with these individuals, reminds us of the trauma these workers experience. At the same time, Hurst and Shepard relate the resistance they undoubtedly display in regard to relocating.

We know that the nature of work is changing rapidly due to many factors. The counselor needs to be aware of local ramifications of all these. For example, the United States Census estimates that the workforce in the United States will increase only 10% by the year 2000; but in Asia and the Pacific it will increase 55% and in Latin America and Africa by 80% (Naisbitt, 1982). What does this mean to the United States' worker? United States' manufacturers will continue to produce less and less in the world market. Manufacturing jobs will grow more scarce. Bardner (1987) points out research done by Johnston, a Fellow at the Hudson Institute. After directing Workforce 2000, a Labor Department study of future job-market needs, Johnston revealed that the jobs of tomorrow will belong to those who can read, write, and think. In addition, Toffler (1980) in The Third Wave, proposed that, while workers in the past were often rewarded for plodding bureaucratic behavior and blind obedience, the workers of the future will be rewarded for accepting responsibility, being able to deal with rapid change and accepting ever more complex tasks, and being sensitively tuned to the people around them.

Literature in the field of career development has not placed enough emphasis on rebuilding the self before relocating the person. As one deals with the development or restructuring of inner self, it is also important to work on improving social skills. Group counseling offers an excellent framework for recognizing that all human beings have spiritual selves, and it is really the spiritual beings that provide us with our true selves. Lacking a coherent conceptual framework for working in a setting such as this, use of a spiritual conceptual model could do much to improve social and spiritual skills. In this way, group counseling could have a positive impact on the quality of service delivered to these clients. I propose a new direction for training and research. Building on work in inner strength and development, I advocate a conceptual model that provides an integrative framework for understanding the role of work in structuring self. For example, a model like that of Ponterotto and Benesch's (1988) could be adapted. It is based on Torrey's transpersonal work. It could be used to integrate learning into a broader, universal counseling context.

Barton (1983) reminds us that it is vital to have a positive attitude toward these clients. He further relates that their jobs have gone for good. Their skills are obsolete. But there is hope for a new future. We must shake off the fixation that education is principally for the young. But are we prepared to offer a system of adult training and education that has the same standing as youth education? It is in times of adversity that we have been most inventive as a society. It is time to put that inventiveness to work. Furthermore, the counselor who wishes to work effectively with these clients must understand the various work ethnic that exists within this framework, then become thoroughly familiar with the resources already available, and be able to develop and implement new programs and resources for these temporarily displaced workers.

Evans (1979) feels that in the next century, professionals, too, will be swelling the ranks of the unemployed. The vulnerability of the professions, he says, is that they act as the exclusive repositories and disseminators of specialist knowledge. Increasingly, this knowledge will be made available to the layman by computer. This startling thought implies that the professional career for which one is so arduously preparing for now, may become obsolete in twenty years in its present form.

Change is constant. And we are always becoming. Therefore, the philosophy and outlook of the counselor and the client must be one that welcomes change.

Involuntary career loss generally is a sudden and a traumatic (perhaps devastating) change for an individual (Jones, 1979). Before one can begin to consider working with the idea of a new job, one must work with the loss of the old one. The necessity of identifying and beginning a new career, when the needs for security, self-direction, purpose and future are not being fulfilled, results in turmoil. The client is grieving the loss of his job as much or more than the loss of other personal possessions. This grieving accentuates the turmoil. It is important here for the client to experience a healing process. An understanding of this by the counselor is critical in the effective assistance of individuals who are experiencing such a crisis. The client has been wounded; he or she feels guilty, ashamed, angry, rejected and numerous other emotions at the loss of the job. Helping strategies will be more effective if the counselor understands the necessity for the client's working through these feelings and,

step by step, rebuilding his or her inner strength which has suffered a tremendous disappointment.

Human beings grieve as a result of significant loss and because the individual's life has been diminished in some aspect, he or she must deal with this. However, the counselor must help the client come to realize that each chance, each feeling, each responsibility we commit ourselves to adds richness to our inner strength. Although such loss may threaten our stability, our sense of self-worth, and destroy our sense of control, we are quite capable of grieving over the loss of anything important to us. Grief over the loss of career may well be more acute than death of a loved one (Jones, 1979). Counselors need to understand this and to avoid imposing their own expectations of what is an appropriate reaction in relation to a loss.

However, it is important for the client to come to realize that we are not yesterday's child, today. Our experiences have an awareness that is beyond him or her. And we cannot go back to that child without knowing, somehow, that he or she could never meet the needs of today. And this awareness gives the client inner strength to grow and to accomplish.

Counseling dislocated workers requires some understanding of and appreciation for the unique effects of unemployment of these individuals. Jones (1979) identified three grief stages that they experience: 1) numbness after notification of the event; 2) yearning and protest characterized by insomnia, loss of appetite and other physiological reactions often accompanied by anger; 3) apathy, aimlessness and disorganization characterized by a disinclination to look toward the future or to see any purpose in life.

The key to understanding the unemployment process and examining the client's self-image includes a knowledge of the stages of job loss (shock, denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance) which are similar to the grieving process. It is also necessary to be able to identify the stages of job search burnout, which begins with enthusiasm and then moves to stagnation, frustration and finally apathy.

The first step as a counselor is to listen without judging the client. It is essential to validate clients as people, as workers, and to accept their feelings about their job loss and search. One important aspect of counseling unemployed workers is to help them make a clear

distinction between their lack of control over the economy and their total control and responsibility for their subsequent job search, emotional responses and future lives.

It is critical to understand that nearly all who suffer an involuntary job loss or see a career change as a significant loss will experience grief reaction. They will not necessarily experience each stage described nor in the order described. The intensity will vary from person to person. Should the loss of career be particularly critical to the individual and should no new career opportunities be readily available, the grief may well lead to substantial disorientation, lowered self-esteem, and possibly negative behavior. Thus when grief is present, counselors must help the individuals deal with their grief before moving on to future planning.

Simply giving the individual permission to grieve is often helpful. Encouraged to make contact with the full extent of feelings and thoughts resulting from the loss can be of significant help to a client. If the grief can be naturally experienced and worked through immediately following the career loss, it is much less likely to create problems later (Jones, 1979).

Through counseling dislocated workers, Hurst & Shepard (1985) found that the typical dislocated worker tended to resist career assessment, vocational guidance or counseling, job-search training and personal support. Identifying this resistance and confronting the clients with it was a major challenge. Many clients merely wanted their old jobs back or were only interested in job referrals. Many workers hoped they would be recalled by their former employers; this hope prevented them from conducting a fully committed search for a new job. Many were so emotionally enmeshed in regaining their benefits and going back to their prior jobs that they resisted considering other possibilities.

Besides dealing with this aspect, the counselor must encourage the learning or relearning of skills for daily living that enable a person to function effectively in a changing society by: 1) Demonstrating skills in understanding and communicating with people of differing backgrounds and lifestyles. 2) Implementing methods for facilitating open communication and eliminating barriers to effective communication with people of differing backgrounds. 3) Increasing skills in decision making and valuing. 4) Providing opportunities for successful educational experiences which develop the individual.

These clients often have negative attitudes and feelings about employment agencies. They are frequently skeptical and suspicious. Feeling degraded, ignored, angry, frustrated, and hopeless, they generally consider training as a waste of time. Likewise, many set a personal "minimum wage" and will not work for less. (Hurst & Shepard, 1985).

In working with a client who had suffered bankruptcy, I found it useful to get the client in a spiral of achievement. First, he rejected his abilities and doubted his capabilities for success. It was necessary to begin working through these feelings. As he did this, his inner strength improved, and he found employment. This increased his inner strength, making it possible to work through the problems created by his feelings of failure. As he worked through these problems, his inner strength improved. This enabled him to start looking at other jobs and the possibility of advancement. One can see the importance of feeding the inner strength in order to get into a spiral of success.

Work taps the spiritual world and supplies strength and growth. Rose (1980) stated in his article that through work, one can feel God-like. We must acknowledge the spiritual aspect of work in counseling. However, Henning and Tirrell (1982) found that many counselors resist spiritual exploration.

It is crucial to understand that our very existence rests on our deep feelings of self worth. Work nurtures these feelings. Hoyt (1974) in defining work, points out that work is conscious effort other than that whose primary purpose is either coping or relaxation, aimed at producing benefits for oneself and/or for oneself and others. Likewise, the feedback of producing benefits for oneself and others increases the inner strength of the individual

To succeed in helping the client deal with his or her temporary displacement, the counselor must be creative. As Zinker (1977) points out, every creative encounter, for both the counselor and the client, is a search for and partial resolution of a problem in the broadest aesthetic meaning of that term. Every resolution increases the client's inner strength.

I have discussed thus far in this paper several aspects that I feel the counselor must be prepared to work with in helping dislocated persons. However, if one were to perform an

adequate counseling task, it would be necessary to have a counseling center for dislocated persons. At this center, all areas of which a person is composed would be covered by workshops, group counseling sessions, and individual sessions. Ideally, these areas would cover the following aspects:

1. The spiritual self. Understanding and strengthening the inner self and helping others to recognize and strengthen theirs is essential in development.

2. The cultural self. Understanding one's own culture and the culture of others is important. Because culture is a way of life, to understand oneself and others, one must study it.

3. The intellectual self. People take pride in their intelligence. There are many aspects to intelligence that go beyond mere books. Intellectual achievement is important and learning where one excels is also important. Likewise, one must learn how to increase the level of this self.

4. The moral self. The importance of honesty, promptness, reliability hard work, respect for self and others must be emphasized.

5. The physical self. Appearance is important. Likewise, nutrition and exercise must be understood as essential if one is to fulfill one's commitments to work.

6. The social self. Most of us want to belong. Having a self that gets along with others vital to most of us. To remain employed, one must possess certain social skills.

7. The economic self. All of the above are necessary if one is to attain the economic self.

To most people, nothing is more important than being a success. That is why it is crucial in working with dislocated persons that all areas of the true self be developed. Success breeds success, and failure breeds failure.

Above all, a counseling center working with these persons must imbed in their clients the ability to look forward to change, to the new person the client is becoming. The client will have wisdom that the present self lacks. The client will have learned to live life more fully. The client will have acquired, through experience, a perspective that lends peace to all situations. The lessons that are being learned today, the pain that overwhelms one now and again, is nurturing the inner self. It is necessary to learn to trust the gift of change. Change: A blessing or a curse? The choice still remains an individual one.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barton, P.E. (1983). Retooling the work force. Vocational Education, 58, 22-24

Best, F. (1984). Technology and the changing nature of work. The Futurist, 13, 61-66.

Bodnar, J. (1987). Your brilliant career, best jobs, bright futures. Changing Times, 26-33.

Cianni, M. & Weitz, A. (1986). The technological society: Implications for women in the work place. Journal of Counseling and Development, 64, 501-503

Evans, C. (1979). The Micro Millennium. New York: Viking.

Goldhammer, K. & Taylor, R. (1972). Career Education: Perspective and Promise. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill.

Guttman, R. (1983). Job training partnership act: New help for the unemployed. Monthly Labor Review, 3-10.

Henning, L. & Tirrell, F. (1982). Counselor resistance to spiritual exploration. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 92-95.

Hoyt, K. (1974). An Introduction to Career Education. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Hoyt, K. (1985). Redesigning education curricula for tomorrow's career demands. Media and Adult Learning, 7, 1-15.

Hoyt, K. (1988). The changing face of the workforce: A review of projections covering the period from 1986 to the year 2000. A paper presented at the National Career Development Association's Diamond Jubilee Conference. Orlando, Florida.

Hoyt, K. (1987). The impact of technology on occupational change: Implications for career guidance. Career Development Quarterly, 35, 269-278.

Hurst, J.R. & Shepard, J.W. (1985). Counseling dislocated workers in job training placement act title III programs. The Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 34, 47-52.

Jones, W.H. (1979). Grief and involuntary career change: Its implications for counseling. The Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 27, 196-201.

Naisbitt, J. (1982). Megatrends. New York: Warner.

Neely, M. (1985). How to Use Major References for Training, Occupational, and Labor Market Information. Kansas State University.

Ponterotto, J. & Benesch, K. (1988). An organizational framework for understanding the role of culture in counseling. Journal of Counseling and Development, 66, 237-242.

Rose, M. (1981). The feel of a writer's work: An inquiry into the phenomenology of work. Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 29, 236-243.

Toffler, A. (1980). The Third Wave. New York: William Morrow.

Zinker, J. (1978). Creative Process in Gestalt Therapy. New York: Random House.